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Title : Need to transfer Safety Matches and Match Skillets from the focus product scheme to the Special Focus Product Scheme.

SHRI MANICKA TAGORE (VIRUDHUNAGAR): Safety matches are produced in Small and Medium Enterprises sector involving minimum capital requirement, but employing a large labour force. The industry is largely concentrated in the drought-prone districts of southern Tamil Nadu and provides direct employment to about 50,000 employees, a majority of whom are unskilled women.

Safety matches (Tariff No. 36050010) and Match Skillets (Tariff No. 36050090) are currently being exported to African, Latin American and other countries wherein they have to face stiff competition from match manufacturers from China, Indonesia, Pakistan and others.

Currently, safety matches is covered under the Focus Product Scheme with a benefit of 2%. Due to the large labour costs involved in the manufacture of safety matches and match skillets. I urge upon the Union Government and Ministry of Commerce and Industry to take early necessary steps to consider inclusion of safety matches (Tariff No. 36050010) and Match Skillets (Tariff No. 36050090) under Special Focus Product Scheme. This will give this huge labour intensive industry a competitive edge and help drive the growth of exports.